

# Hospice & Palliative Care



A program of Community Hospice & Palliative Care  
in collaboration with Northeast Florida hospitals

## What is Hospice & Palliative Care?

**Hospice** is a type of care designed to provide support during an advanced illness. Hospice care focuses on comfort and quality of life, rather than a cure, with the goal of helping people live each day as fully as possible. It is not just for people in their last days of life. It is appropriate for those who have a limited life expectancy of 12 months (six months for Medicare eligibility) if the illness runs its normal course. Hospice care is most often provided in the individual's setting, such as their home.

**Palliative Care** is a medical specialty dedicated to helping people with a variety of serious illnesses find a better quality of life. A palliative care professional works with you, your loved ones and your physician to create a plan of care that offers relief from pain, symptoms and stress. They explain your choices and ensure your needs and wishes are honored. It is not dependent on prognosis and is often provided alongside life prolonging treatment.

## How are they similar?

- Both provide relief from pain and distressing symptoms
- Both provide compassionate care, comfort and support for people and their loved ones
- Both combine physical, emotional, psychosocial and spiritual care
- Both focus on quality of life

## How are they different?

### Palliative Care

- Medical management can be provided alongside life prolonging treatment
- Anyone with a serious or complex illness or condition, regardless of prognosis, is eligible
- Focus of care is on pain & symptom management; establishing goals of care, clarifying medical information, and facilitating complex decision making

### Hospice Care

- Treatment plan offers pain relief and comfort when the burden of curative treatments outweighs benefit
- People with end-stage illness and a life expectancy of 12 months or less (6 months or less for Medicare) are eligible
- Focus of care is on pain & symptom management with an interdisciplinary team; ongoing caregiver support and bereavement after death

## Consider these Questions

Everyone has the right to make their own health care choices and inform others of their wishes in the event they cannot speak for themselves someday. These are questions to think and talk about as you consider hospice & palliative care:

- What makes life meaningful for me?
- Under what conditions/situations would I want and not want hospice & palliative care?
- Would I want services from hospice and palliative care if:
  - I have a terminal illness or end-stage condition?
  - I am unable to recognize my loved ones or know who I am?

**Remember to inform your doctors, family and loved ones about your wishes and decisions regarding hospice & palliative care as part of your advance care planning.**